



NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - STATEWIDE IMPACTS

Week Ending 5/1/09

- ◆ Halifax County has many families with parents active in the military. Because of this, many children are left at home with just one parent, while the other one is deployed in harm's way somewhere across the world. Because of this problem, NC Cooperative Extension in Halifax County applied for and received a grant for nearly \$30,000 through the 4-H Rural Life Center and the National Military Family Association to host an *Operation Purple Camp* this summer. Children at this program will learn that they are not alone in this type of situation and will develop a support network of other campers whom they can turn to in times of need. They will also have a chance to find out that they themselves are also heroes.
- ◆ Our Dare County Family and Consumer Science agent received a call from a former *Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less* participant who had just returned from a doctor's visit. She lost a total of 53 pounds in 7 months, and her doctor reported that her cholesterol level was down 19 points. The doctor advised the patient to stop taking her blood pressure medication because her hypertension was now under control. Before this program, the participant could not exercise for more than 10 minutes at a time and now she reports riding an exercise bike for 2 hours a day, every day. She stated, "I had so much weight to lose that I didn't think I could ever be a healthy weight without surgery. The *Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less* program has given me the hope that with continued work, I can achieve a healthy weight through exercise and healthy eating."
- ◆ Tobacco Farmers grow all their tobacco transplants in the greenhouse. Many diseases attack these plants, and it is important to correctly diagnose the disease in order to take appropriate action. A Martin County grower called our Extension Agent to visit his greenhouse. He had plants turning yellow and suspected Tobacco Mosaic Virus. If Tobacco Mosaic Virus attacks greenhouse plants, it can spread across the entire house and cause severe yield loss. The agent took pictures and along with advice from our NCSU tobacco specialist, determined the problem to be cold injury. Only a few plants were affected and the grower was able to use the rest of the plants. If the grower had destroyed the plants and had to purchase new plants, he would have spent about \$9,000.
- ◆ NC Cooperative Extension in Catawba County recently assisted one field crops producer in evaluating his fertility options on 240 acres of cropland, pasture and hay acreage. Recent changes in the prices for commercial nitrogen, fertilizer and poultry litter have created a difficult environment for some growers to determine the most cost effective option for their fertility needs. Extension provided guidance on interpreting soil test analysis, waste analysis of poultry litter and the associated costs of using the various nitrogen and fertilizer sources to save this grower \$33 per acre on his fertility program. The cumulative total savings over his conventional program amounted to \$7,920.
- ◆ NC Cooperative Extension's Ability Garden in New Hanover County partners with 4-H every summer to provide a unique camp for young people who are living with some form of disability, which can include autism, Down Syndrome, and cerebral palsy. Normal daily care of children with these complex health conditions can drain the family budget, leaving few resources for the simple activities that most children take for granted. The Wilmington Civitan Club offers a competitive grant application each year for local organizations that serve people living with disabilities. Cooperative Extension's Ability Garden was the committee's top choice and received \$1,000 to cover camp costs. As a result of this grant, no child attending camp will be required to pay an entry fee. Activities paid for by the grant that foster relaxed socialization include planting seeds, growing and eating fresh vegetables, making crafts, and Water Day. Caregivers also benefit from an opportunity for respite from daily care obligations.

- ◆ Obtaining an Animal Waste Operators license is a great way for individuals to make themselves more valuable in the animal agriculture industry. NC Cooperative Extension in Lenoir County certified 25 new Animal Waste Operators through a two-day training course. Their new skills include: proper soil, waste, and tissue sampling; the ability to perform a lagoon sludge survey; proper procedures for irrigation system calibration; and the ability to cooperate with Division of Water Quality inspectors. Of those that attended the training, 75% of them said this certification would enable them to gain employment or become more valuable to their current employer. Because of their new skills, 80% of the participants will be able to save their employer \$500 per year per farm because now they have the knowledge to perform these necessary procedures themselves instead of paying a private industry specialist.
- ◆ Halifax County has a high rate of obesity and lack of proper nutritional habits for youth. Because of this issue, the NC Cooperative Extension through the 4-H Rural Life Center made it a priority to ensure that children in Halifax County understood that healthy eating and exercise go hand in hand. Children were served a nutritious lunch while at the Center for Day Camp and attended classes which included education in the areas of diet and exercise. The meals served met the requirements of the Summer Food Service Program and as a result, through a written evaluation, 85% of the youth in the program said they would continue to eat healthy and exercise at home. Because of this success, the 4-H Rural Life Center won the Southeast Region's Best Practice Award for the Promotion of Healthy Environments.
- ◆ Promoting safe food handling practices is important to the economy in Dare County as the tourist-driven economy relies heavily on the restaurant industry. Our Dare Family and Consumer Sciences Agent collaborated with the Environmental Health Department to deliver *ServSafe*, a two-day food safety program for restaurant managers, to 20 food service professionals that represented 14 dining establishments in Dare County. Following the class, 100% of the participants passed the *ServSafe* exam. As the estimated cost of a foodborne illness outbreak to an establishment is \$75,000, NC Cooperative Extension has potentially saved North Carolina \$1,050,000 by educating the managers of these establishments on proper food handling practices.